

OUR BATTERY;

OR THE

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BY O. P. CUTTER.

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NEVINS' BOOK AND JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.

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Lieutenant Bennett's section. Lieut. B. and his command were camped in a fine grove, near a large creek. The First Wisconsin and Thirty-fifth Indiana Infantry, together with some Kentucky Cavalry, were camped near by.

On the 10th of May, an order came for them to proceed directly to Pulaski; and at noon they were on the road,—the First Wisconsin going with them. The left section had, also, an order to go to the same place, and left immediately, under command of Lieutenants Sypher and Sturges. I will here state, that Lieutenant Sypher had returned, and joined us at Columbia, some two weeks previous, having recovered his health. He had been sick nearly two months, and went home from Houstonville, where we had left him. A number of our sick, who had been left behind, rejoined us here.

On the 20th of May, Lieutenant Bennett returned to Columbia with the right section, and immediately proceeded to Kalioke Station, six miles from Columbia, and on the railroad. On the 21st inst., the left section, under Lieutenant Sypher, returned, and went into camp at the old place. The night of June 2d. had another alarm, caused by the firing of our pickets. The next day, a Union meeting was held at the place; and during the afternoon had still another alarm, but, like the former, proved without cause. On the 29th of May, the left section again left Columbia, the center section now only remaining; and, on the 9th of June, they also left for Murfreesboro.

CHAPTER VI.

EXPEDITION OF THE CENTER SECTION.

On Monday, June 9th, the Center Section left Columbia for Murfreesboro, leaving the forge, battery and baggage wagons behind, together with the tents and camp equipage. The reason for this move was supposed to be an attack apprehended on Murfreesboro, as there had been several skirmishes in that vicinity.

At 5 A. M. the two guns started, under command of Captain Standart and Lieutenant Baldwin. At 2 P. M. the forge and battery wagons, together with what men were left; also left along with the First Kentucky Cavalry. Standart's command marched four miles beyond Franklin that day, and camped for the night. The remainder went within five miles of the above place, and also camped. The next day, the last-named went to within seven miles of Murfreesboro. The center section reached the town at 2 P. M. the same day. The roads, with the exception of some six miles, were in fine order, being macadamized. The country is well adapted for farming, and we passed many large fields of wheat, corn and cotton. The wheat, generally, was being cut. On Wednesday morning, June 11th, with our two guns we set out, in company with the Sixty-ninth and Seventy-fourth Ohio, Third Minnesota, Eleventh and part of the Ninth Michigan—all Infantry—and one battalion each of the Fourth

Kentucky and Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, together with four guns of the First Tennessee and four of First Kentucky Artillery. At 9 o'clock, same morning, the First Kentucky Cavalry, together with our forge and battery wagon, arrived at Murfreesboro, and were at once sent forward to join the main body of the army. The expedition was under command of General Dumont.

Early that evening our expedition reached Readyville, and camped in a corn-field near a creek. At 11 o'clock, the same night, all hands were ordered out to proceed on the march. A good deal of grumbling was caused at this unlooked for command, but all must obey.

About this time, an eclipse of the moon occurred, and the men jocosely remarked that we were only wakened to take an astronomical survey of it.

After considerable delay, at 1 o'clock we were in motion. For the first few miles the road was quite hilly, and one of the Kentucky battery's caissons was capsized over a bank, and had to be left behind. The roads were now in pretty good condition, but very dusty, and at daylight we had advanced some ten miles. The weather was extremely warm, but the road was well shaded by woods. At 11 o'clock arrived at McMinnville, a small town of some five hundred inhabitants, and situated on the Manchester and McMinnville Railroad. The place is strongly "secesh." There was an M. D. along with us, who had lately been driven out of the

town on account of strong Union sentiments. He was acting as our guide.

At McMinnville we camped in an open field near the town—the Tennessee and Kentucky Batteries being camped near by. The remainder of the force were camped at different places. On the day following, a part of the force, consisting of the Third Minnesota, and First Kentucky Infantry, one battalion each of the Fourth Kentucky and Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, one section of Hewitt's Kentucky, and our center section of artillery, were ordered forward to Pikeville, to drive out a body of Secesh Cavalry, who were reported as being at that place. At 5 P.M., took up our line of march. The next morning, early, the rest of the force followed.

Our road now lay through a wild, rough, and mountainous country, but thinly inhabited and little cultivated—corn being the only grain we saw. The long and dry continuance of the weather had drained all the creeks, so that water was not readily obtained, and, for the want of which, both man and beast suffered terribly. The hills were steep and rocky, and our poor horses, overcome with heat and thirst, were bleeding at the nose, and ready to give out; but by dint of hard urging, and easing them of their loads, we finally reached Pikeville early in the afternoon of Saturday, June 14th. Much to our disappointment, found that the secesh had left three days prior to our arrival.

Pikeville is a small place, containing one hun-

dred and fifty inhabitants, and is situated at the head of Sequatchie Valley. It is on or near the dividing line of East and Middle Tennessee. There were several Union men living here, some of whom joined Woolford's Cavalry.

The advance, finding their mission at an end, set out on their return the next day. In the meantime the rear detachment, which had camped half way between McMinnville and Pikeville the night before, the next morning proceeded on; but when they had gone four or five miles, were ordered to face about and retrace their steps.

A day and night's march again brought us to McMinnville, where we camped on the river's bank. Those who went forward also arrived on the afternoon of the same day, which was Monday, June 16th.

We remained here until 5 o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th, and then once more moved towards Murfreesboro. Marched all night, and at daylight of the 18th entered the town of Woodbury, where we camped near our former ground. Remained here during the day, and at night resumed our march. During the night were visited by a heavy thunder storm, rendering it so dark as to be almost impossible to keep the road. At 4 o'clock next morning reached Murfreesboro, and went into camp.

Murfreesboro is quite a pretty place, and contains a population of five thousand. It is the county seat of Rutland, and is located on the Nashville and

Chattanooga Railroad, being some thirty miles from the former place.

Friday morning, at daylight, we started for Columbia, free from infantry and cavalry, with the exception of one company of the First Kentucky. Captain Standart left us at Murfreesboro and went to Shelbyville, where Lieutenant Sypher was stationed with the left section. We were accordingly under command of Lieutenant Baldwin. We camped the first night, two miles beyond Franklin. Made an early start on Saturday morning, June 21st, and reached Columbia at 11 A. M. the same day. Camped on the east side of Duck River, where we found Lieutenant Bennett with the second detachment of the right section, they having arrived the night previous from Rogersville, Alabama, where they left the first detachment. The Seventy-eighth Pennsylvania Infantry were encamped with them. All were glad to once more get back to their old quarters. We had been gone just thirteen days, during which time we had marched two hundred and fifty miles, and which resulted in no particular advantage; but, on the contrary, had considerably worn down the men and horses, besides losing our tents and part of our baggage. Take it all in all, it was the most severe march we had yet endured. Our present camping ground was not near as pleasant as formerly.

July 1st, moved our quarters one mile north-east of the town. This was a much better location in

many respects. The Seventy-eighth Pennsylvania camped near us. July 4th, at 3 A. M., one section of our battery went into town, and fired a salute of thirty-four guns. At noon, the entire battery did the same. On July 9th, the left and center sections started for Shelbyville, marching till about 8 o'clock that evening, and then halted near a creek to feed horses and get supper. At 11 o'clock, the moon having risen, were ordered forward, and soon passed through the small town of Farmington. The stars and stripes were flying from a high staff in the center of the town, and several of the inhabitants displayed small United States flags in front of their houses.

TOGETHER. AGAIN.

We were here joined by the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry; and, on the morning of July 10th, entered Shelbyville, where we found Lieutenant Sypher with the left section, camped one mile from town. This was the first time that the entire battery had camped together since the 7th of April. Distance from Columbia, forty miles.

Shelbyville is located on Duck River, and is the terminus of a branch of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, and distant about seventy-five miles from Nashville. It contains a population of three thousand five hundred, and is the county seat of Bedford. About one-half of the residents are good Unionists.

We remained here only a few hours, being ordered off at 6 o'clock the same evening. The left section had been here nearly a month. A short time after getting under way, it commenced raining quite hard. At 10 o'clock the same night arrived at Watrace, where we remained until next morning. We laid out in the storm all night, and, in the morning, after breakfast, went one mile from town and camped. The Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania Infantry were already here.

Watrace is a small station on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. Population about two hundred. Our camping ground was on a hill, and near a fine creek. For two days, everything was quiet; but, on Sunday morning, July 13th, at daylight, heavy firing was heard in the direction of Murfreesboro, which is about twenty miles distant. All sorts of conjectures were formed in regard to the cause of it. At night, received a report that the Rebels had attacked Murfreesboro, and had succeeded in obtaining possession of the town. Had captured the Third Minnesota Infantry, and part of Hewitt's First Kentucky Battery. At first, this report was doubted, but in the end proved true.

From certain rumors current in camp, it was supposed that a force of the enemy were in the vicinity of Watrace, and an attack was apprehended at any moment. At dark struck our tents, harnessed our horses, and made all preparation to meet the enemy. About 10 o'clock, received an order to move.

The right section remained near camp. The left section took position at the depot, the center section going out some distance below the depot, and close to the track. All kept vigilant watch during the night, but no enemy appeared.

The following day we received reinforcements, consisting of the Fifty-first Ohio, part of the Ninth Michigan, and two companies of the Third Minnesota, who were engaged in guarding some station at the time of the capture of Murfreesboro, and had luckily escaped. We also had a small force of cavalry. During the day of Monday, July 14th, scouts were sent out in different directions. A small barricade was built at the point where the center section was posted. At night, troops were stationed in different places along the road, and the utmost caution observed to prevent a surprise. But the night passed, like the one previous, without an attack.

At daylight, the whole force was ordered to move, and were soon under way. We were not allowed to wait for breakfast, or to feed the horses. What this movement was for, or where we were going, none, save the officers in command, knew.

A march of twenty miles brought us to Tullahoma, which is south of Wartrace, and on the same railroad. It is also at the junction of the Manchester and McMinnville road. On arriving there, we encamped in an orchard near the depot. At dark, the left section were posted on a high elevation, at the north-east

part of the town. There was already a large force here, and more troops still arriving. The concentrating of so large a force at this point, looked as if a battle was brewing. Preparations were at once made to resist any force the enemy might bring to oppose us. Rifle pits were dug, and earth works thrown up. Various rumors circulated through camp. Several persons were arrested on the charge of being spies; one of whom, rumor had it, was found guilty, and sentenced to be hung.

Three days thus passed by, during which time we were visited by frequent showers of rain.

On the night of the 18th of July, the center section moved to a grove close by the depot, while the right section moved in another direction, and near where the left was posted. At 9 o'clock next morning, received orders to march, and a general breaking up of camp now took place; some going in one direction—some in another. Our battery, together with the Eighteenth Kentucky Infantry, went towards Shelbyville. Marched about nine miles that day, and camped in a large field. During the night, had a heavy thunder storm, with high wind. At daylight, were on the move. The weather was quite cloudy, and threatened more rain, but soon cleared up and became quite pleasant. At 10 o'clock A. M., entered Shelbyville, and, after remaining there an hour, again moved forward. We were now traveling over a macadamized road, which was in most excellent condition. After going eight miles, we camped near a creek, and re

mained here until daylight the next morning, when we again resumed our march. At 11 o'clock A. M. arrived at Murfreesboro, where we found a large Union force, under Major General Nelson. We camped on the Nashville pike, about one mile from town. The next morning, there was quite a movement of troops. A large force headed by General Nelson went towards Nashville. Our battery moved camp to a high elevation overlooking the town. About three hundred slaves had been brought in from the surrounding country, and set to work building a redoubt for the use of artillery. Our men were engaged in putting the camping ground in good order. In a short time, report reached us that a large force of Rebels had entered Lebanon and captured the place without firing a gun. All kinds of rumors were put in circulation regarding this movement. At 4 o'clock, we received orders to harness horses and be prepared to march at any moment. About the same time, a "cock and bull" story was started, that a party of "secesh" had entered town with a flag of truce and demanded the surrender of the place. But it afterwards appeared that a small body of rebels had approached the place for the purpose of effecting an exchange of prisoners. At dark, no order had been given to move. Another sensation was created, to the effect that some Rebel Cavalry had been seen skulking in the upper edge of a cornfield, near which we were encamped.

All this time we were momentarily expecting to move; but, for some reason, the order was delayed.

It seemed as if those in command did not know what to do. After waiting until after midnight, we at last received word to march. The night was very dark, and the clouds threatened an instant storm. We moved on at a snail-like pace until daylight, and shortly after arrived at Stone river, which we were obliged to ford, the bridge having been destroyed. We now knew that we were going towards Lebanon. The slaves along the road reported that a large body of Rebel Cavalry had gone towards Murfreesboro late the day previous. Here, again, was a fine opportunity to manufacture long "yarns;" and mole-hills were magnified into mountains. Notwithstanding all this, we kept on towards Lebanon. When we had proceeded to within ten miles of the town, a halt was ordered, and some of the Cavalry were sent forward to reconnoiter. In about an hour they returned, bringing in two prisoners whom they had captured. They reported that the enemy had left Lebanon. Order was now given to "about face," and we were soon on the return to Murfreesboro. When we had arrived to within two miles of where the Nashville and McMinnville road crosses the Murfreesboro and Lebanon road, it was reported that a body of the enemy were there, waiting to offer us battle; and, from the stories we had heard in the morning, it looked somewhat reasonable.

Our forces were soon drawn up in line of battle, and moved forward to meet the supposed enemy;

Colonel Barnes, of the Eighth Kentucky, acting as Brigadier General.

After deploying right and left, and sending out scouts, it was soon ascertained that there was no enemy lying in wait. It was now nearly dark, and we had eaten nothing during the day, except a little hard bread and cold bacon, but the word "forward" was given, and on we went. About 7 o'clock we again crossed Stone river, and here camped, or rather bivouacked, for the night. After feeding our teams, and preparing some coffee, stretched ourselves on the ground to obtain a little sleep, being pretty well tired out.

The next morning, as soon as it was light enough to see, and without having anything to eat, we again moved forward towards Murfreesboro. We had barely gone two miles when we were ordered to about face and march back. What this all meant was more than we were able to surmise. The boys remarked that we were going back to water, and which has since been a by-word, whenever a counter-march has taken place.

Once more we crossed the river, and on arriving at the cross-roads before mentioned, were ordered to camp, which we were glad to do, though it was far from being a pleasant place. This was on the 24th of July.

We remained here until the afternoon of the 25th, without anything worthy of note transpiring.

At 6 o'clock P.M. we started for Murfreesboro, arriving there at 8 o'clock the same evening. We halted in front of the court-house, and after standing some two hours, were ordered to unhitch horses, but not to take off harness, and lay by for the night. We spread our blankets on the sidewalk, and, with an excellent brick sidewalk for a bed, dreamed the hours away. Early in the morning, went to our old camping ground on the hill. This was on the 27th of July.

NOTE.—The enemy which we expected to meet at the cross-roads near Stone river, on the night of the 23d of July, proved to be General Nelson's command, who had returned by this road. Colonel Barnes—who, it will be recollected, was in command of our force—was unaware of this movement. The slaves had mistaken General Nelson's force for a body of "secesh."

CHAPTER VII.

MOVING—STILL MOVING.

On arriving at the old quarters, we found the negroes still at work on the rebovt, which they had nearly completed. The Twenty-third Kentucky were camped near us. We now supposed that we would be allowed at least a short respite after our previous three weeks' hard marching; but in this we were mistaken. And, as the old Scotch proverb runs—

"The best laid plans of men and mice

Often gang aglee."

At noon of the 28th July, we received orders,